

Dear VT House Healthcare Committee Members:

Please support Continued Reimbursement for Phone-Only Medical Services. This is extremely important for all the reasons stated by the VT Medical Society (noted below in blue background).

Psychiatrists and other mental health providers often offer phone call appointments for patients who need them, and/or phone check-ins at times of heightened need or crisis. The providers should be reimbursed for these crucial services which sometimes save lives and may reduce healthcare costs (such as unnecessary visits to Emergency Departments).

Thank you for your consideration.

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- Equity (we know that older, minority and lower socio-economic status individuals are most at risk for lacking broadband or the technology to connect with video)
- Patient preference (some patients prefer to connect without video)
- Reimbursement continuing at the same rate with in-person services (it can take the same if not more effort, time, staffing to serve patients via telehealth)
- Standard of care (the same standard of care applies regardless of the modality and clinicians have the skills to screen patient to see if they can address an issue via phone vs in-person)